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SERMON

PREACH'D

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BEFORE the JUDGES,

AT THE

ASSIZES

HOLDEN AT

APPLEBY,

FOR THE

County of *Westmorland.*

by the Reverend and Learned Divine
J. Robinson, D. D.

Printed by the Judges Order.

Enter'd according to Order.

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Christian Reader.

I Being desired by many Eminent Persones of Note let this Sermon come into Print and be made publick to the World; I have dealt with it as our Saviour did with the Cripple; first set it upon its feet and then bid it walk into the World, where it hath found such Acceptance, that I earnestly desired for a second Impression. If you reap any benefit by it, give God the praise and remember me in your prayers, and I have my desire.

Tours,

J. ROBINSON

Jer. xvii. 10 *The Heart is deceitful above all Things and desperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord search the Heart, I try the Reins, even to give every Man according to his Ways, and according to the Fruit of his Doings.*

AS there are several Books of God, which he hath written for the good of all the Children of Men, so there are two special Books, in which the Lord will proceed in Judgment against the Sons and Daughters of Men: The Books which God hath given to the Children of Men, for the Use and Comfort of Salvation, are these; First and chiefly, the Books of the Old and New Testament, where Jesus Christ, in all his Offices, King, Priest and Prophet, for to rule and guide us by his Spirit in our Hearts, is made known and declared unto us. And therein likewise is set down how every one of us ought to live, and demean himself in this present World; with several fearful Examples of God's heavy Judgments against wicked and notorious Sinners, in drowning the old World for their Sins and Wickedness: So likewise, in destroying *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* by Fire from Heaven. With fundry other fearful Examples of God's heavy Wrath and Indignation, both against Sin and Sinners, in general and particular: *All which, as St. Jude saith in his Epistle, are set forth for our Examples, suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire:* Not for our Examples, that we should do as they did, to commit such Sins, lest the Lord lay upon us such or more heavier Weights of Wrath and Vengeance. So likewise in the Books of the Scripture is set forth the blessed and happy Estate and Condition of all the Godly,
both

both in this Life, and the Life to come. The Joys that are prepared for the Godly, and the Eternal Torments that are appointed for the Wicked, are here likewise set forth in the Book of the Scripture.

Another great Book of God, is the Book of the Creatures, containing those mighty Works both of the Creation and Providence, wherein the Almightyness, Power and Goodness of God are plainly written, that he that runs may read and see it: For as the Apostle saith, *The invisible Things of him from the Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood, by Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead, so that they are without Excuse.* Who but an Almighty God could, out of nothing, create all Things? as David saith, *It is nothing but the Almighty Power and wonderful Providence of God that bears up the Earth and upholds the Foundation thereof:* And this Book, even the very Heathens, who know not God in this World, who never heard of Jesus Christ or Salvation are acquainted with; they (I say) by seeing and reading the mighty Works of God in the World. do confess and say, Verily there is a God, and none but a God could create these glorious Creatures, the Sun, Moon, and Stars.

So likewise there two are special Books in which God will judge all the Sons and Daughters of Men at the last. And there is first, the Book of his Remembrance, written by himself; wherein the Lives of Men, yea their very Thoughts are recorded; as David saith, *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Men that they are Vanity:* O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me; thou knoweth my Thoughts afar off, Thou compasseth my Path. and all my Ways, There is not a Word in my Mouth but thou, O Lord, knowest it

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it altogether. And although the Heart of Man is deceitful above all Things, yet God doth exactly know every Turning and Corner thereof; *I the Lord know the Heart,* (saith he) *I try the Reins.* There is nothing that can be hid from his eternal all seeing Eye.

And then Secondly, there is the Book of Conscience, in which is exactly written all our Actions, Thoughts, Words, and Deeds, and according to this Book of Conscience, and what is therein written, will the Lord proceed in Judgment, and every Man's Conscience shall be his own Judge. Saith God, what hast thou done? How hast thou lived in the World? Why, thus and thus have I lived, saith Conscience. Conscience will then speak the Truth, and nothing but the Truth. O Lord (saith a wicked Man's Conscience) I have dishonoured thy Name. I have abused thy Grace and Mercy, in turning it into Wantonness. I have abused thy Creatures by wasteful and riotous spending, to please and satisfy my Lust, saith the Prodigal Man's Conscience, by Chambering and Wantonness, by Gaming and Dancing away my precious Time, saith the voluptuous Man's Conscience, Thou gavest me Time and Seasons of Grace and Mercy, and many precious Opportunities and soul Advantages, whereby I might have wrought out my own Salvation with Fear and Trembling; as St Peter saith, *I might have made my Calling and Election sure to my Soul, but instead of working out my own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, of making my Calling and Election sure, I have wrought my own Damnation without either Fear or Wit, and my self sure of eternal and everlasting Wrath and Condemnation,* saith the meer Moral, formal and prophane Christians Consciences. Ah Lord! saith the dissembling Hypocrite's Conscience, I have been but an outside Christian, I have gone to Church, but only for Fashion's Sake and to be look'd upon,

upon, and esteem'd among my Neighbours; I have made a Shew indeed and Pretence of Religion and Holiness, but it hath been a meer Shew, I have altogether denied the Power and Practice of it in my Life and Conversation, as it is, *They profess that they know God, but in Works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good Work reprobate*: And why so; because he saith, *Their Minds and Consciences are defiled*. Ah, my Conscience told me several Times that I was but a Hypocrite, a meer painted Sepulchre, fair whitout, but foul within: O, but I would not hear Conscience then, but slighted and neglected him; Ah! But now my Conscience makes me hear him whether I will or no, therefore Lord, do with me what thou pleasest, true and righteous art thou in all thy Dealings towards me, be they never so harsh, they are the just Reward of my Iniquities. Saith the covetous Man's Conscience, and the griping, cruel, exorbitant Usurer's Conscience, Lord, I confess I have been a covetous Wretch, I have not coveted after Heaven; it hath been my whole Trade and Business couzen and cheat others, and to gripe and grind the Faces of the Poor, and all that I could do to others; but, alas for me, what have I done! I have quite clean undone my Soul, and that to all Eternity; I have been very cruel and unmerciful to others; I would not forgive my poor Brethren in the least; Lord I deserve no Mercy at thy Hands, the hottest Place in Hell will be to cool for me.

What have you done with all your Wealth, saith God to rich Men, all those great Estates and Possessions which I lent you or rather entrusted you with as Stewards? How have you improved them? What of them have you laid out or lent to me again in relieving my poor Members? What Good have you

gotten

otten to your own Soul by them? Have you laid
 any Thing in Store for eternal Life; O no, faith
 conscience, *I have not, Lord, I have not: But this*
have done, I have treasured up Wrath against the
Day of Wrath: My Gold and Silver is cankered, and
the Rust of them is now a Witress against me to con-
demn me, and eats my Flesh as it were Fire: And now
 to the Hire of the Labourers, which have reaped
 my Field, which I kept back by Fraud, cri-
 th; and the Cries of those that have reaped are
 entered into the Ears of the Lord of Sabbaths; I
 have lived in Pleasure on the Earth, and been wan-
 on, and I have nourished my Heart as in a Day of
 laughter. I told you (faith Conscience) that for
 all your Pleasures, and for all your Riches, and
 for all your Greatness and Delight, you must come
 to Judgment, and give an Account to God for all
 your Actions, and for all your Wealth? And how
 and which Way you spent every Penny that he
 lent you, did not I tell you, faith Conscience?
 true it is my Conscience told me, but I slighted
 conscience as a Thing of no Value or Account: Ah,
 miserable Man that I was, to slight this Voice of
 conscience! Woe unto me, my Punishment is less
 than my Iniquities deserve! Thus and thus will
 Men's Consciences deal with them before the Lord.

When *Peter* had denied his Lord and Master, his
 conscience let him alone once, yea twice, but the
 third Time the Cock crew, and *Peter's* Heart smote
 him for what he had done, and he went forth and
 wept bitterly; *Peter* did not go about to stop the
 Mouth of his Conscience as *Judas* did, and so hang-
 himself; No, *Peter* closed with the Voice of his
 conscience, and so by his true and unfeigned Re-
 pentance, obtained Mercy. So likewise *David*,
 when

when the Prophet *Nathan* had by the Parable of the Ew Lamb shewed *David* the Evil of his Sins presently *David* was convinced in his Conscience of the Horridness of his Sins; and *David* said unto *Nathan*, *I have sinned against the Lord: Have Mercy upon me, O God* saith *David* in the Psalm of Repentance) according to thy loving Kindness, and according to the Multitude of thy tender Mercies, blot out my Transgression; Wash me thoroughly from Iniquity, and cleanse me from my Sin; For I acknowledge my Transgression and my Sin is ever before me Against thee, even thee only, have I sinned and done this Evil in thy Sight. *David* had a very tender Conscience, for when he did but cut off Sam's Skirt, his Heart smote him, his Conscience accused him.

O, but how many wicked Men are there now whose Conscience tells them over and over, again and again of their Sins, and yet for all that they stop their Ears against Conscience; how many Times doth the beastly Drunkard's Conscience, the prophane Swearer's and Sabbath-Breaker's Consciences tell them of their Sins; and yet notwithstanding all the Checks of Conscience they will go on in their Sins, and fill up the Measures of their Iniquities, and so make Conscience to fill up the black Scroll of Indictments against them, where they are everlastingly condemned: O, if Men would but be convinced in their Consciences of the Evil of their Ways, when their Consciences tell them of it; how many Thousands might have been brought Home by Repentance to Life eternal, who now run headlong to the Pit of Destruction; I am persuaded that many who couzen and cheat by Undermining and Overselling, by using false Weights

and Measures, cannot chuse but meet with many Checks from their Consciences; O that Men would be convinced of this Evil.

Hear this, O ye that swallow up the Needy by false Weights and Measures: O be convinced in thy Conscience! Make Conscience thy Friend now, by forsaking thy evil Practices, lest Conscience prove thy Foe to torment thee for ever. But Men now-a-days, instead of being convinced in their Consciences of the Evil of their Ways, are not ashamed to commit all Manner of Abominations and that with Greediness, and then lay all the Blame upon their poor Consciences.

Ask them but the Reason why they deny Christ and the Scripture, and cast off Ordinances and the Ministry of Christ, and live as they list, and refuse Subjection to Magistrates, and in their Actions become worse than Beasts, why do they hold such damnable and devilish Opinions both against God and Christ, yea against Humanity it self, ask them the Reason of these Things, and what do they say; It is from the Light within us: It is the Liberty of our Consciences, and have we not fought for Liberty of Conscience; ah, cursed Wretch, the Light within you is Darkness! Is this the Liberty of Conscience? No, no, this is the Liberty of thy Lusts, and the Delusion of the Devil, thou has seared thy Conscience with a hot Iron: but yet at last thy Conscience, tho' thou hast defiled it never so much, will put the Saddle upon the right Horse, and charge thee home with all the Blame. Is Liberty of Conscience a Liberty to Sin: No. God forbid; *shall we*; I *say* (saith St. Paul) *that Grace may abound, no, God forbid.* I dare not (saith a gracious Heart) my Conscience tells me I must not, *How shall I* (saith Joseph)

Joseph) Gen: xxx. 9. *do this great Wickedness, and sin against God.* The Grace of God (saith the Apostle Paul) *that brings Salvation, teacheth to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World;* and not to live as we list, which is a Sign of no Grace at all. A truly tender Conscience will be very tender of committing Sin, and will have a close watch and circumspect over himself, how he walks and how he lives, concluding that so the Name of God and Christ be not blasphemed; but in these last and worst of Times, wherein Men (as St. Paul saith) *made Shipwreck of Faith and good Conscience,* Men have not minded this at all, but have taken in the full Liberty to commit all Manner of Sins; and I beseech God that this Sin be not charged upon those, who instead of restraining Men from Sin, and punishing them for Sin, have by their evil Examples, encouraged them to sin. Let Men take heed how they sin, because Grace abounds: For (saith the Apostle) *if we sin wilfully after this that we have received Knowledge of Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a certain fearful Looking for the Judgment and fiery Indignation from the Lord;* for the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth of God in Unrighteousness. Read these two Texts and tremble all ye that take Liberty to sin, because the Grace of God hath abounded, how will ye be able to look upon either God or Conscience in the Face, certainly you will never be able to do it unless you repent; for if Men will sin wilfully, notwithstanding all their Checks of Conscience, their Conscience will condemn them irresistably before the Lord; for certain it is, there is Conscience in every Man that sees, observes, and takes Notice of all his Ways, and will keep a just Account of them, and so be a Witness either for or against the Soul at the Day of Judgment. What was it that made the Apostles so joy-

in their Troubles and Persecutions? Was it not the
 witness of their Consciences? *Our Rejoycing is this* (saith
 the *Paul*) *the Testimony of our Consciences*. What was it
 that made *Paul* and *Silas* sing in the Prison for Joy? Was
 not their Conscience told them they were happy and
 rich Men, notwithstanding all their Sufferings and
 reproaches.

Now what Conscience is, I shall briefly shew you, and
 include; Conscience is a Thing with which God cre-
 ated the Soul of Man by Creation, and is for our Com-
 mands. If we live well as we ought to do, but
 be a dreadful Terror to all those who live and
 in their Sins; for this Conscience was in *Adam* be-
 fore his Fall, for where there is no Sin, what needeth
 who Accuser? so long as *Adam* kept the Commands of
 he had there was no Cause for Conscience to condemn him,
 but as soon as *Adam* transgress'd, his Conscience flew in
 Grace Face, which made him fly from the Face of God;
 after this Conscience is only in Men and Women, for brute
 beasts wanting Reason, are not capable of Conscience,
 as for the Beasts when they die there is an End of them,
 but it is not so with Men, for Conscience in Man follows
 God-Man farther than the Grave; they might be happy,
 but of Man oftentimes against all Reason. Equity, or Con-
 science, doth worse than the worst of Beasts, and this
 Conscience keepeth his Court in the Heart, and there
 look upon Life and Death of the Soul, and according as he
 will every one's Work, so doth he pass the Sentence of
 condemnation or Absolution, for there is no bribing of
 Conscience, Conscience will speak the Truth of every
 by be's Ways before the Lord, be they good or be they
 bad. If our Heart condemn us (saith St. John) God is
 all hiser than our Hearts, that is, Conscience.
 So be and God hath given this Power to Conscience, be-
 Day of Men should have no Plea of Excuse before the
 Lord.

Lord. It was not *Pilate's* Washing of his Hand saying, *I am guiltless of the Blood of this just Man*; could wash away the Guilt of *Christ's* Blood from his Conscience; *Pilate's* Conscience told him that he was a just Man, and that he saw no Cause of Death against him at all, and yet cursed *Pilate*, contrary to the dictates of his own Conscience, delivered the Lord of Life into the Hands of bloody Men to be crucified, and so bore the Guilt of his Blood upon his own Soul.

But he that will not endure Conscience to reprove him for his Sins, certainly he loves to go to Hell without trouble, and he that will not endure Conscience to testify of his Sins here, shall, whether he will or no, suffer sufficient Torments for his Sins hereafter, for an evil Conscience is a Hell to the Soul here, and shall be the Hell hereafter.

Now then if there be such a Thing in Man as Conscience, and that his Conscience shall either justify or condemn him, then let every Man take heed how he carries his Conversation in the World: Do not give Leave to your selves to think, say, or do any Thing, but what you are willing to own before the Lord at the last Day; before let every one of us think and speak, and so do, that we may not have a Conscience to condemn us; but let us live as those that expect to have a Conscience Witness against them before the Lord, that with Godly Sincerity they have had their Conversation in this World. But Multitudes are there in the World that live as if there was no Conscience at all, neither God nor Devil, Hell nor Heaven? *Whose God is their Belly, and whose Destruction, who declare their Sins as Sodom, and call themselves not as Gomorrah; wee unto them* (saith the Lord) *they have rewarded Evil to themselves.* This may be said of thousands among us, whose Countenance testifies against them; their wanton Carriages, painted Faces,

powdered Locks, and other Antick Fashions, testify
 against thousands, both Men and Women, that they
 do not Mind this great Truth, that Conscience can and
 will declare all their Doings to God, proud *Hamans*,
Nabals, and whoring *Jezabels*, declare *their*
Sodom, and *bide them not*. And as for Conscience,
 they turn him off, but let these miserable Wretches
 consider this, as the Apostle saith, *Woe unto them who have*
added Evil unto themselves. They have made a long
 bloody Bill for Conscience, to pen against them at
 all Day of the Term of their Lives, as soon as ever
 their Souls are departed from their Bodies, Sentence shall
 be pronounced against them, according to the Light and Testimo-
 ny of their own Conscience.

When then Conscience will give Testimony of every
 one's Ways, let us not slight Conscience, let us not stop
 the Mouth of Conscience, seeing Conscience can and will
 speak, and tell us what we are; many there are that go
 to stop the Mouth of Conscience, when Conscience
 speaks plainly with them, and tells them of their Sins,
 they cannot endure to hear that, but remember the
 terrible End of *Judas*, what said *Judas's* Conscience to
 him? *Thou hast betrayed thy Lord and Master for a little*

silver, covetuous Wretch! but could *Judas's* Silver stop
 the Mouth of his Conscience? No, *Judas's* Conscience so
 tormented him, that he flung in the Money again, and to
 day he hangs himself.

So likewise remember the fearful Estate of *Spira*, and
 many others, whose Consciences made them to possess the
 Kingdom of God here on Earth: *A wounded Spirit* (saith
 the Lord) *who can bear*, a tormenting and condemning
 Conscience who can endure! O there is no resisting of
 Conscience, it is God's Vicegerent in the Soul. When
 Conscience speaks threatening Language to many for such
 and

and such Sins, they seek to turn Conscience out of
 but because they cannot possibly do this, they strive
 his Mouth by running wilfully into Sin, like Men
 desperately give up their Souls to the Devil, and so
 Shipwreck of Faith, Conscience, Soul, and all for
 and then follows (as we have seen by woful Experi-
 self-Itabbing, self-hanging, drowning or poisoning
 some such like accursed Ends. Oh, consider this
 that forget God, and make no Conscience of your
 you undermine your own Salvation. May Men de-
 Conscience as *Felix* did with *Paul*, they will hear
 ence so long as it speaks good, but when Conscience
 them throughly of their Sins, their darling Sins,
 they have enough of Conscience, and so put him
 they be better at Leisure.

When there was no King in *Israel*, every Man did
 was good in his own Eyes; so where there is no Con-
 ence alive in the Soul, Men live as they list; but yea
 all this, Conscience will speak home at last. If thou
 a Drunkard, or an Adulterer, or an unjust Dealer
 whatsoever Sin it is thou art guilty of, Conscience
 make it known, and if at last Conscience doth con-
 thou shalt never be saved: But, on the contrary, thou
 and Devils say thou art an Hypocrite, or the like, yet
 thou hast the Testimony of thy Conscience, God
 own thee as just and righteous: One Dram of the
 of Conscience is worth a thousand Worlds; what
 the Damned in Hell give for a little of this lasting
This Peace which passeth all Understanding, the War
 which is Hell, yea worse than Hell.

Think upon this, O ye great Ones of the World, who
 live in Pleasure, remember that there is a Conscience,
 that there is a God, and that thou hast a precious and
 mortal Soul, which if thy Conscience witness ag-
 shall be thrown into Hell: You that eat the Fat and
 of the Earth, and drink Wine in Bowls, and cloath

lives in Silks, remember this, that Conscience takes Notice of all thy Ways, of the Pride of thy Heart, of the Vanity of thy Life, and setteth all down in his *Black Book*: You that like the Harlot cry, *Prov. 7. Let us take our fill of Pleasure.* Consider that all these Things must have an End, when all is done, the Bell must toll, and you must dance after Death's Pipe, who are now singing and swinging your selves in worldly Pleasures and Delights. O, if God should say unto any soul of you as he did to the rich Fool, *This Night shall thy Soul be taken from thee.* It shall little advantage you then to weep and cry, O that I was out of these internal and external Flames! O that I had hearkened, when Time was, to the Voice of Christ and my own Conscience.

The Sighs and Groans of dying Men are often bad, but the Cries and Groans of the Damned in Hell can never be imagined or expressed: Oh, consider this you that sin away Conscience, that quaff and drink away Conscience, who are accompanying one another in Sin; take heed you be not one Day found to weep over one another's Backs in Hell; if the Lord awaken your sleepy dead Consciences before you deal hence and be no more seen. What Pity is it that Persecutions that bear the Image of God, and as it were in outward glory and Beauty, God's above others, what Pity is it that such Beauty should come to be embraced by ugly like, worthless Devils in Hell? Thousands there are that court God and sport, pin and paint away their Time, whose End is to be burned, and shall at last perish in Hell. Fruitless as the fig-trees they are that bear nothing but Leaves; *Cut them down* (saith God) *and cast them into the Fire.* To perish in a Prison or on a Dunghill is nothing, to die for want of Food is nothing, *Lazarus* died so whilst *Dives* lived, with his delicious Fare died on his Bed of Down, and was cast into Hell. You that lie upon Beds of Ivory, and have your Hangings of Needle-work, if you get not agitated and a good Conscience, Hell shall be your Fare, and so shall you be clothed.

And Devils your Companions to torment you for ever. And, *who shall be able to stand in the Day of the Lords Wrath, and who can dwell with everlasting Burning.* Companions in sin shall be Companions in Hell, those who can sport and play one with another, shall Hell drag and torment one another: Oh, what miserable Wretches were we to loose the Heaven of Heavens for little vain Delight, the Love and Favour of God for Love and Favour of wicked Companions, in whose presence we more delighted than in the everlasting Love of God, *whose Pleasures are Pleasures for evermore.* We profiteth it now that we have had our Wine and our Delights; O wretched Creatures that we are, who deliver us from this dying Death, these miserable Torments? Woe unto us, we have rewarded Evil to our Souls, we are banished for ever from the Presence of the Lord, and have utterly lost that inward Peace of Conscience, the Want of which addeth Torment to our Torments, and maketh us in our Misery more exceedingly miserable.

Now the Lord give every one of us his Peace, his Joy, which that we may all have, the Peace of God which passeth all Understanding, keep your Hearts and Minds in the Love and Knowledge of Jesus Christ; and the Blood of Christ wash and purge our Consciences from dead Works, that we may serve the living God; which we may all do, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with you all. *Amen.*

F I N I S.